

or a decision based on documents in the probate package; and

(2) If they do not request a formal hearing, the probate case may be assigned to an attorney decision maker, who will convene an in-person informal hearing at a site convenient to most of the parties.

**§ 15.302 What happens after the probate package is referred to OHA?**

After OHA receives the probate package, it will assign the case to a deciding official, who will conduct the probate proceeding and issue a written decision or order in accordance with 43 CFR part 4, subpart D.

**§ 15.303 What happens after the probate decision is made?**

(a) We will not pay claims, transfer title to land, or distribute trust cash assets for 75 days after the final OHA decision or order is mailed to the interested parties.

(b) If an interested party files a timely request for de novo review, a request for rehearing, or an appeal in accordance with 43 CFR part 4, subpart D, we will not pay claims, transfer title to land, or distribute trust cash assets until the request or appeal is resolved.

(c) After 75 days, if no request for de novo review, request for rehearing, or appeal has been filed, or after any request or appeal has been resolved, the following actions will take place:

(1) The LTRO will change its land title records for the trust and restricted property in accordance with the final decision or order; and

(2) OST will pay claims and distribute the IIM account in accordance with the final decision or order.

**Subpart E—Information and Records**

**§ 15.401 How can I find out the status of a probate?**

You may request information about the status of an Indian probate from any BIA agency or regional office.

**§ 15.402 Who owns the records associated with this part?**

(a) Records are the property of the United States if they:

(1) Are made or received by a tribe or tribal organization in the conduct of a federal trust function under this part, including the operation of a trust program pursuant to Public Law 93-638 as amended; and

(2) Evidence the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities undertaken in the performance of a federal trust function under this part.

(b) Records are the property of the tribe if they are:

(1) Not covered by paragraph (a) of this section; and

(2) Are made or received by a tribe or tribal organization in the conduct of business with the Department of the Interior under this part.

**§ 15.403 How must records associated with this part be preserved?**

(a) Any organization, including tribes and tribal organizations, that has records identified in § 15.402(a):

(1) Must preserve the records in accordance with approved Departmental records retention procedures under the Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. Chapters 29, 31 and 33; and

(2) Is subject to inspection by the Secretary and the Archivist of the United States with respect to these records and related records management practices and safeguards required under the Federal Records Act.

(b) A tribe or tribal organization should preserve the records identified in § 15.402(b) for the period authorized by the Archivist of the United States for similar Department of the Interior records under 44 U.S.C. Chapter 33. If a tribe or tribal organization does not do so, it may be unable to adequately document essential transactions or furnish information necessary to protect its legal and financial rights or those of persons affected by its activities.

**PART 16—ESTATES OF INDIANS OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES**

- Sec.
- 16.1 Definitions.
- 16.2 Scope of regulations.
- 16.3 Legal representation in State courts.
- 16.4 Exchange of information within the Department.
- 16.5 Acceptance and acknowledgement of service of process.